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Security Information

OIC Planning Book
18 December 1952

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

WATCH COMMITTEE

1. The effectiveness of the Watch Committee continues to be a matter of concern to OCI specifically and to the IAC generally. Since the last Status Report of OIC was written, this office has sought informally to bring itself up to date on current procedures of and reactions to the Committee, particularly in the light of the studies conducted in early 1951. These studies pointed up certain weaknesses in Watch Committee operation, and culminated in a memorandum to the DCI of 18 April 1951, which recommended that OIC and OCI discuss specific committee objectives with [redacted]. Subsequent discussions of this type, and more especially discussions initiated by the DD/I in April and May of 1952, appear to have produced a more satisfactory method of operation. At least this would appear to be the case based on the rather limited observations provided by a visit by a member of this office to the 124th meeting of the Committee on 17 December and informal conversations with members of OCI and G-2 concerned with the Committee.

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2. The Watch Committee meeting of 17 December (which was said to be typical of those held since [redacted] assumed the Chair) was significantly different from criticized meetings in 1951 and early 1952 in the following respects:

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a. The meeting began promptly at 10:00 and terminated promptly at noon.

b. An agenda (termed a "check list") was available and was followed.

c. No more than thirty minutes was spent on any of the four areas treated (Korea-Soviet Far East-China-Japan; Southeast Asia; Eastern Europe; USSR). An informative Air Force roundup on the development of Soviet air facilities in East Germany occupied the first 35 minutes of discussion and adequately tied together matters which had apparently concerned the Committee over several previous meetings.

d. Full and free interchange of questions, comments, and discussions was permitted by the Chair, but closely controlled in the interest of time and pertinence.

3. The contributions of State (Mr. Klosson) and CIA (Mr. Hendrickson) were pointed and fully accepted.

4. Air, Navy, and Ground Force contributions were short and to the

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point. The battery of G-2 colonels still sit at the table, but the Chair carefully restricts any tendency to extraneous elaboration. There were 16 people at the table and thirty on the back benches. The double representation from each agency, except CIA (based on intelligence categories) necessarily doubles the size of the committee proper. The back bench group is undoubtedly too large but did not interrupt the flow of the meeting.

5. On three specific matters the Committee undertook to backtrack on unfinished business and resolved unanswered questions.

6. OIC understands the OUI Watch Committee representatives feel that the pre-committee CIA meeting on Tuesdays adequately covers the Agency's preparation for the meeting and departmental interests.

7. Status

Under the chairmanship of [] Committee procedures appear to have bettered substantially, both in the eyes of CIA and of the other participant informally asked for a view, namely, G-2 (Colonel Whipple). There is undoubtedly room for improvement in the method with which individually reported factual indications are tested against hypotheses, although this method of discussion was used several times during the one meeting attended. [] has been most receptive to specific suggestions; AD/CI [] and AD/IC will continue to seek to improve the operation of the Watch Committee.

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